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# Looking up in Scotland?

## Multinationalism, Multiculturalism and Political Elites

### Abstract

At a time when all the political parties of Scotland are trying to establish a persuasive vision of the nation, inquiry into where ethnic and racial minorities fit into these debates provides one understudied means of bridging literatures on multinationalism and multiculturalism. Focusing especially on the lesser known question of how elite political actors are positioning minorities within projects of nation building, this article draws upon original empirical data in which three predominant clusters emerge. The first centres on an *aspirational pluralism*, the second concerns competing ways in which the legacy of Scotland's Empire resonates, and the third points to potential *limitations in minority claims-making and recognition*. The article illustrates how elite political actors can play a vital role in ensuring that appeals to nationhood in Scotland can be meaningfully calibrated to include minorities too.

**Keywords:** Scotland; Elites; Nation; Multinationalism; Multiculturalism; Identity; Ethnicity

## Introduction<sup>i</sup>

In recent years the constitutional possibilities raised by the separate (though related) debates over Scottish nationalism and Scottish Independence have enjoyed prominence, both inside and well beyond the borders of the Scotland. Despite the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum result, which saw a majority (55%) vote in favour on staying in the United Kingdom, the nature and content of the wider constitutional settlement remains salient, and all Scottish political parties are engaged in trying to establish a persuasive vision of the nation. Where ethnic and racial minorities fit into these debates provides one understudied means of bridging literatures on multinationalism and multiculturalism. Focusing especially on the lesser known question of how elite political actors are positioning minorities within projects of nation building, this article draws upon original empirical data in which three predominant clusters emerge. The first centres on an aspirational pluralism, in so far political elites are less inclined – in contrast to counterparts in some other minority nations - to place ethnically determined barriers on membership of Scottish nationhood. The second concerns the competing ways in which the legacy of Scotland's place in the British Empire is appropriated by actors of different political hues, and so assumes a multiform role. The third cluster points to potential limitations in minority claims-making and recognition, especially in terms of formal multi-lingualism and corporate multi-faithism, something that may partly be explained by the tension *between* multinationalism and multiculturalism. The article therefore begins with a discussion of what is understood as *multinationalism studies* and how this may be distilled into debates about multiculturalism in Scotland. It then moves to set out the rationale for, and approach to,

studying political elites in Scotland, before turning to the empirical data as it is expressed in the three clusters of argumentation set out above. The article then moves to consider how elite political actors can play a vital role in ensuring that appeals to nationhood in Scotland can be meaningfully calibrated to include minorities too.

## **Multinationalism Studies**

The study of multinationalism has generated a wide-ranging literature that spans both theoretical and empirical inquiry on ideal and existing political settlements (Peleg, 2007). Thematically concerned with multi-level governance, constitutional devolution and federalism, what we might term *multinationalism studies* also foregrounds questions of identity and citizenship, and so can constitute a rich sub-field of comparative politics; one that is distinct (though obviously related to) the study of territorial politics (McEwen et al, 2012). Typically focused on ‘states that have restructured themselves to accommodate significant sub-state nationalist movements’ (Kymlicka. 2011: 282), multinationalism studies especially explores the character and self-identity of ‘nested’ nations which bear distinguishing histories and features of contemporary civil-society.

There are conceivably a number of important challenges to this framing. These may include the extent to which ‘multinationalism’ is the most appropriate appellation or best analytical category, and that it obscures multi-level dynamics. There is moreover disagreement over how we should conceptualise the ways collective identities are mobilised, and more broadly how boundaries based upon something greater than territory (e.g., citizenship entitlements for ethnic diaspora) need to offer a more elaborate ethical

rationale. Some of these issues rehearse arguments found in the nationalism studies literature; others are incorporated from disputes in the citizenship literature.

The tension relevant for this paper concerns how multinationalism can relate to *multiculturalist* perspectives. The latter, though used differently across varying contexts, has more broadly been focused on the accommodation and integration of migrant and post-migrant groups typically termed ‘ethnic minorities’. To confuse matters multiculturalism has also taken in multinational questions e.g., multiculturalist Canada focused from the outset on constitutional and land issues too. We might therefore summarise that multiculturalism can simultaneously describe the political accommodation by the state and/or a dominant group of all minority cultures defined first and foremost by reference to race or ethnicity, and, additionally but more controversially, by reference to other group-defining characteristics such as nationality, aboriginality, or religion. (Modood and Meer, 2013: 113).

As a set of political positions, the tension *between* multinationalism and multiculturalism turns on how ‘for minority nations, the sustainability of their projects in the context of growing immigration depends on immigrants making a conscious choice to affiliate themselves with that national project’ (Kymlicka, 2011: 294). Some try to overcome the tension by stating that multinational and multicultural perspectives can be mutually reinforcing, with each perspective contesting notions of monocultural nation-states, and encouraging cultural minority formation, ‘linking these to social equality and protection from discrimination’ (Castles, 2000: 5). Thus several accounts understand the two

approaches as co-constituting in so far as one creates space for the other (Crick, 2007, 2009); perhaps illustrated in Britain by the ways in which ‘present immigrant minorities easily fit into...the diversity of its four nations’ (Parekh, 2009: 37). Yet in a number of cases these perspectives have not come together as predicted, or have come to imply problematic hierarchies within federal settlements where established *nations* set the terms of inclusion for more recent *ethnic minorities* (Foweraker and Landman, 2000). Signalling a revision of an earlier hypothesis, that multinationalism and multiculturalism would indeed come together, Kymlicka (2011: 289) now recognises that ‘countries with an inherited ethos of accommodation in relation to old minorities are *not predestined to be inclusive of new minorities* – there is no inherent tendency for the former to spill over to the latter (emphasis added)’. Indeed, he continues, in many cases we are finding that ‘practises of multinational citizenship are privileged over, and preclude, the fair inclusion of immigrants’ (ibid).

### **Multiculturalism in Scotland**

At least one possible exception to Kymlicka’s reading is the Scotland. While undoubtedly affected by the advancing and receding tides of British multiculturalism (Hussain and Miller, 2006: 31), Scotland has long been described as a ‘stateless nation’, at least since the 1707 Acts of Union moved parliamentary sovereignty Westminster<sup>ii</sup>. This union, however, was only ever partial in that ‘it did not take away from Scotland any of the major institutions of civic life’ (Patterson, 2000: 46). It did not dissolve civil-society, or the independence of the Church of Scotland, systems of law, education, or local governance. It was instead ‘an amalgamation of Parliaments...not an absorption of

Scotland into England' (ibid) (cf Pittock, 2012: 13). This is perhaps why the characterisation of Scotland as a 'stateless nation' was always more contentious than might be implied, and the existence of a significant institutional fabric in social and political life offers one answer to Luis Moreno's (2006) quandary as to how 'strong Scottishness seemed to combine with a weaker popular quest for achieving institutional self-government as compared with Catalans' mobilisation in the late 1970s'. In either case, through processes of legal and political devolution facilitated through the Scotland Act (1998) which re-established a Scottish parliament, 'after almost 300 years [it] means that Scotland is no longer stateless' (McCrone, 2001: 1). What remains underexplored from a multiculturalist perspective, 'the extent to which ethnicity continues to shape their own view of Scottish nationalism and national identity (Mycock, 2012: 65)'.

Even though questions of multinationalism and multiculturalism in Scotland 'have managed to fire past each other' (McCrone, 2002: 304), there is a prevailing assumption that a 'civic' and inclusive 'big tent' national identity is a prevailing aspiration (Keating, 2009 and cf Hepburn and Rosie, 2014). Yet it remains to be ascertained as to where ethnic and racial minorities, sometimes dubbed the 'new Scots', might come to rest in debates about nationalist politics, identity and contemporary nationhood more broadly.

It has been argued that this may result from the comparatively smaller presence of such groups in Scotland<sup>iii</sup>, or that such minorities have not become politicised in a manner comparable to England (McCrone, 2001: 171), and certainly that they have not been racialized in the same way (Miles, 1986). Since 'all civic and democratic cultures are

inevitably embedded into specific ethno-national and religious histories' (Bader, 2005: 169), however, Scotland cannot rely on the view that in merely promoting itself as 'impeccably civic' (Keating, 2009: 217) it will be able to secure a future in which ethnic and racial minorities are included.

Bridging literatures on migration related minority 'difference' (i.e., multiculturalism) with those concerning nationalism, and drawing on primary research interviews with Scottish politicians from across the spectrum, this article elaborates on the ways in which ideas of a Scottish nationhood are being configured according to specific agendas of equality and non-discrimination, existing church-settlements, prevailing notions of 'civic' participation and inclusion, and implicit norms of 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' minority claims-making, amongst other things. Before proceeding, however, a fuller methodological rationale needs to be set out, and this is what we turn to next.

### **Why political elites in Scotland?**

It is said that since devolution 'a distinct Scottish political class has emerged, with its own career trajectory separate from the UK one' (Keating and Cairney, 2006: 56). Interestingly, in their study Keating and Cairney find that this does not so much mark a radical break with what has gone before, rather 'devolution has accelerated the trend towards professional middle class leadership' (ibid) . Leith and Soule (2012) too explore the emergence of an elite political class in Scotland. They observe, for example, that while elite political actors 'present an inclusive sense of identity that is not predicated on



any sense of birth, ethnicity or history' (ibid. 148), this contrasts with mass perception which conceives the 'Scottish nation as having much firmer and more distinct boundaries in terms of membership' (ibid. 149).

The nature and extent of this possible divergence is explored further below, what is important to register here is that with the exception of these few accounts the study of elite political actors in Scotland is relatively sparse, but is otherwise consistent with a broader tendency where social and political scientists 'too rarely 'study up'' (Ostrander, 1995: 133 ). There are important methodological reasons for this, not least obstacles centring on researcher access, yet the notion that elites matter is commonplace within the social and political sciences, and in so far as 'their undeniable influence' warrants consideration (Leith and Soule, 2012: 122), empirical inquiry might draw on at least two rich veins of literature in democratic theory (Plamenatz, 1973) and nationalism studies (Gellner, 1983). While neither is a perfect fit, we might search for an idea of institutional opportunities amongst those typically associated with behaviourist traditions; something that flourished for a period in North American political sociology. This saw both Dahl's (1961) *Who Governs?* and Mill's *The Power Elite* employ methods that focused on the behaviour of a relatively small number of actors in particular political situations. While these authors profoundly disagreed in their understanding and analyses of political systems, they had in common the view that 'the politically active elites in a modern democracy are...only the tip of what appears in national parliaments' (Goodwin, 1987: 226). The wider body of elites in their account was populated by 'politics facilitating occupations' (King, 1980 quoted in Keating and Cairney, 2006: 45). These include journalists, lobbyists, barristers and financiers, amongst others, and are precisely some of the elites who emerge in more diffuse

conceptions envisaged in nationalism studies literatures, some of which maintains that ‘cultures and politics are forged by small minorities, usually by one kind of elites or other’ (Smith, 2008: 6). Were we to assess the normative premises of such views we would inevitably encounter a dense literature elaborating the continuing disputes over the creation of nations, national identities, and their relationship to each other *and* to non-rational ‘intuitive’ and ‘emotional’ pulls of ancestries and cultures, and so forth. Chief amongst these: whether or not ‘nations’ are social and political formations that developed in the proliferation of modern states from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries onwards , or whether they are tied to historical formations – or ‘core ethnies’ - bearing an older pedigree that may be obscured by a modernist focus . These tensions are relevant because while the current focus is a more future oriented one, ‘the debris of history [remain]a source of building materials for discretionary construction by current history making entrepreneurs’ (Hussain and Miller, 2006: 121). Indeed we know that ‘elites in Scotland are...trying to harness an already significant level of national attachment’ (Leith and Soule, 2012: 122), and we are precisely interested in the ways in which some political elites are imagining Scottish nationhood vis-à-vis ethnic and racial minorities. Here Leith and Soule (2012: 121-2) take the view that political elites in Scotland “invite the masses into history’ (Nairn, 1997: 340), and they maintain that elites do so in a language that connects elite and mass ideas of what the ‘nation’ is. In contemporary Scotland’, they continue, ‘everyday politics is a situation of contending elites who seek to construct a specific sense of national identity’ (ibid).

It is important however not to overstate this, for we should be reject the assumption that national identities in Scotland are marshalled in a purely party-political fashion.

McCrone and Bechhofer (2010) have repeatedly established that there is no linear relationship (running in either direction) between self-identification as Scottish and an aspiration for greater national self-determination (either in terms of constitutional arrangements for greater devolution or indeed independence). Hence if ‘one does the survey equivalent of hitting people over the head with a blunt instrument and forces them to choose just one national identity’ (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2009: 9), it still remains the case that we encounter only a ‘weak’ association between national identity and devolution, a tendency that remains true of those deemed ‘exclusive Scots’ (who self-define as Scottish and not British). These findings are re-iterated in Bond and Rosie’s (2010) conclusion that although the prioritisations of one or other national identities can be related to likely electoral choices, the tendency is one of a ‘non-alignment’ (ibid. 96).

We might further add that since the Scottish National Party (SNP) has been in power with an unexpected overall Parliamentary majority following the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary election, the appeal of full independence has not prevailed. Of course this was no longer a theoretical question. The SNP’s victory allowed them to honour their manifesto pledge to negotiate with Westminster to hold an independence referendum. This took place on 18 September 2014 and showed that electoral support (expressed in voting patterns) for the Scottish Nationalist Party was not matched by support for the constitutional independence of Scotland. With an electoral turn out of nearly 85% (the highest in any election in the UK since the 1950s) over 55% voted against Independence. While post-referendum analyses are still being undertaken, a Lord Ashcroft opinion poll carried out on 18-19<sup>th</sup> September is useful indicator of preferences. What is especially relevant for

our discussion is that with a sample of over 2000 respondents it showed that 20% of SNP supporters were unlikely to vote for independence. This reiterates why we should avoid the category error of trying either to equate Scottish nationalism with - or principally understand it through - the premier nationalist party. Moreover, the campaign in favour of independence has had the support of another party represented in the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Greens, as well as all of the independent Members (the late Margo MacDonald, Jean Urquhart, John Finnie, and Bill Walker).

While this is not to deny that ‘nationalists are [most] successful when they capture the ‘nation’ for their own political project’ (McCrone, 2001: 177), in the case of Scotland it does not need to be about independence alone. It is precisely because political elites of *all* hues are reaching for some ownership of nationalism in Scotland that makes the topic especially interesting (the unionist parties in Scotland are thus named *Scottish* Labour, *Scottish* Conservatives, *Scottish* Liberal Democrats, etc). The tendency of course is to assume that the independents are the only nationalists and so ignore how all y appropriate the nation and configure Scottishness to their respective policy projects.

In the next sections I outline three political themes that emerge from the interview data with Scottish MSPs. In total 21 interviews were undertaken with members of the Scottish Parliament (out of a possible 129 members), between March and November 2012 in their Parliamentary offices in Holyrood. As outlined in Table 1 a gender balance was sought and achieved for the two parties with the largest number of Parliamentarians: 4 male and 4 female each for the Scottish National Party and Scottish Labour, out of a total number

of 65 and 37 respectively. This was less successful with the 2 Conservative respondents (2 male out of a possible 15), 2 male Liberal Democrat respondents (out of a possible 5), and 1 Green respondent (out of a possible 2) (here the gender of the interviewee is not cited as it would easily identify the respondent since there is 1 male and 1 female Scottish Green Party representative in the Scottish Parliament).

**[Table 1 about here]**

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Scottish Labour Party	4	4	8
Scottish National Party	4	4	8
Scottish Conservative Party	2	1	3
Scottish Liberal Democrats	2	0	2
Scottish Green Party	*	*	1
<i>Total</i>	12	9	22

As a sample the number of interviewees are just short a fifth and an additional set of interviews (11 in total) were conducted with journalists, civil society actors and intellectuals deemed to be in ‘politics facilitating occupations’ (King, 1980 quoted in Keating and Cairney, 2006: 45). The latter were especially instructive during the early stages of the research, and the discussion here is principally focused on the parliamentary elites who remain understudied in the literature in minorities and nationhood in Scotland. It is important to bear in mind that these are not intended to be a statistically

representative number but instead a meaningful inclusion of people who have featured in debates about and/or are relevant to the topic more broadly.

**[Table 2 about here]**

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Academic	2	1	3
Civil Servant	1	1	2
Civil Society Actor	1	2	3
Journalist	2	1	3
<i>Total</i>	6	5	11

### **An Aspirational Pluralism**

The historian Tom Devine has proposed that we can understand the incremental self-confidence expressed by political elites in Scotland as an ‘aspirational nationalism’ (quoted in Goursoyanni, 2012: 63). This he allies to a broader social transformation and cultural renaissance that has accompanied both devolution and the shift to a service based economy. A key question for our discussion is whether this also includes an aspiration for pluralism? Here there is evidence of a consensus across unionists and nationalists that a project of diverse nation building is underway. Below are four expressions of this, two from unionist (Scottish Labour and Scottish Liberal Democrats) and two from nationalist (Scottish National Party and Scottish Greens) parliamentarians. Two frames are especially evident. The first gains purchase from Scotland’s historical multinational diversity and is expressed in the following two quotations.

If you're in Scotland, or you're in Wales, you know, it's abundantly clear. Because you're in a small part of Britain, the smaller nations within Britain, it's very clear that Britain is a union of nations. It's inherently a multinational, multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural entity. It can't be anything else. (Scottish Green Party MSP [H1]).

If you read down through Scotland's history we have a fairly, I think, proud tradition of assimilating waves of different groups in a way that has sustained a population in many communities. And I think that's led to a far more diverse and vibrant and interesting cultural mix.... (Scottish Liberal Democrat MSP [M1])

The second frame is more active in so far as Scottish nationalism, it is claimed by both nationalist and unionist political elites, has been cast in an inclusive mould, not least by these MSP's respective parties.

I suppose, without patting ourselves on the back too much, this is to the credit of the Scottish parliament. And, I mean, I say Labour and SNP, I'm not actually saying that the other parties have dissented from this, but they dominate Scottish politics to such an extent that it's what they do that's been decisive in these areas. So, you know, that probably sounds a bit complacent, but I do think that we've had a more positive record than, you know, both Labour and Conservative in England (Scottish Labour Party MSP [T1]).

So, we've captured nationalism and made it something positive, and made it civic, so that's been, you know, eight decades worth of work. It doesn't happen overnight. [...] If you don't have this alternative nationalism, national movement, national political party that a nationalist might be civic, then the EDLs of the world, and the BNPs and the National Fronts, they fill that void.... (Scottish National Party MSP [E1]).

Each testimony illustrates the nebulous ways in which elite political actors understand the function of nationhood. Beginning with the first, to place Scotland's diversity within a historical register of multinationalism assumes that this has served as a sort of prophylactic against exclusivity. This is a hypothesis that can be partially tested. Surveying the attitudes of Scottish majorities to claims-making by minorities on nationhood in Scotland, McCrone and Bechhofer (2010: 922, 937) point to a small but consistent 'ethnic penalty' that reveals itself as *marginally* more in Scotland than in

England, such that “‘Scottish’ is possibly more likely to equate to ‘being white’”. As they discuss, residence in Scotland is deemed a weak claim on national identity, but when markers such as accent are added, ‘between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of people accept the claim, but introducing parentage, which implies a blood link, produces a further big increase in acceptance’ (McCrone and Bechhofer, 2010: 937). What should we make of this? It certainly challenges the prevalent view amongst political elites that ‘there’s not a sort of idea amongst Scottish people that you have to be white and, you know, in order to be Scottish’ (Conservative MSP [P2]).

While the marginally higher rejection rates towards non-white in Scotland compared with England is concerning, the authors argue that it is important not to exceptionalise Scottish attitudes, for while they are slightly more exclusionary than English attitudes, they are not radically so. Interestingly, in their follow up study, Bechhofer and McCrone (2012: 1364) found a closer pattern between England and Scotland when they looked to see whether national identity ‘discriminates in terms of *judging claims*’, something statistically affected by levels of education or and age. Either way, these findings need to be understood alongside ways in which minorities in Scotland are more likely than their counterparts in England to appropriate hyphenating self-defined identity categories e.g., Scottish-Pakistani. This is a well-established trend that political elites sometimes bring into support their view that Scottishness is an open identity. One respondent describes this in the following terms:

...there’s something in that Scottishness, and a separate Scottish identity, or nationalism [that] is not about choosing one identity over the other, and maybe identity can be multi-layered, can be fluid, and can exist cohesively, rather than be juxtaposed, and constantly in conflict with one another (SNP MSP [A1]).



This is a well-established trend in self-identification, our understanding of which was profoundly deepened in Hussain and Miller's (2006: 168) work. The latter observe that '[b]ecause spatial [territorial] identities are not the primary identities for a majority of [Scottish] Pakistanis; they find it easier to adopt a Scottish identity'. Other smaller scale studies open up lines of inquiry that broadly show continuities in this trajectory, which is partly why McCrone and Bechhofer (2010: 926) have argued that 'being Scottish may be thought of as an inclusive club with a low entry tariff', a kind of "'Big tent' Scottishness' where 'everyone living in the country has a claim'. The important aspect here is the subjective confidence and willingness amongst minorities to stake such a claim.

What, however, of the second view that political elites have *actively* steered Scottish nationhood in a more inclusive direction, what Reicher and Hopkins (2001: 92) quote one SNP Member of Parliament as naming: 'a *tartan* in which so many different, brightly coloured parts of the whole merge together as a pattern.' We might here point to political speeches e.g., Alex Salmond has previously stated, and subsequently reinforced, that "'Scotland is not Quebec... the linguistic and ethnic basis [of Quebec] nationalism is a two-edged sword... we [in Scotland] follow that path of civic nationalism' (Salmond, 1995 quoted in Brubaker, 2004). Or we might highlight policy references not to 'Scottish people' but to 'all the people of Scotland'. Indeed the white paper *Scotland's Future* (2013), which set out the Scottish Government's case for Independence, insists that 'a commitment to multicultural Scotland will be a cornerstone of the nation on independence' (ibid. 271).

In many respects what is most interesting is that this is a self-conscious goal amongst political elites, because it distinguishes Scotland from comparable autonomy seeking nations. Of course there is an instrumental political logic at play, in so far as political elites 'have a powerful incentive to recruit immigrants to their national projects, both to disprove charges of ethnic exclusion and to build internal consensus' (Kymlicka, 2011: 294). This would seem self-evident. 'Better in terms of *realpolitik* to draw the boundary around as many as possible; better to have them inside the tent than out of it if one was trying to govern the kingdom' (McCrone, 2001: 178). Yet some other minority nations have shown a marked inability amongst elite political actors to overcome this. As one puts it:

If you live and work in Scotland, you're a Scot, and if you want to be.... You need to want to be part of it. We can't bully people into being Scottish if they don't want to be, you know? (SNP MSP [L1]).

Scottish political elites therefore express their nationalism as a 'political' and not 'social' matter, and certainly not as a matter of blood and soil. While the distinction between 'civic' and 'ethnic' nationalism has already been identified as problematic, it makes sense why the late Bashir Ahmed, Scotland's first ethnic minority MSP, could confidently state: 'it isn't important where you come from, what matters is where we are going together as a nation' (quoted in Salmond, 2009). Either way, historical experience self-evidently casts a shadow over contemporary expressions of nationhood in nearly all cases, and it is to this in relation to Scotland that we now turn.

## **Expeditionary Proteophilia**

Scottish political elites frequently invoke experiences of Empire and, allied but also parallel to, the history of Scotland as an emigrant sending nation in their discussion of pluralism. The relevant question for our discussion is how these narratives are assembled. Tom Devine, for example, has complained that ‘between 1936 and 2003, there was no academic analysis of Scotland’s role in the British Empire’ (quoted in Goursoyanni, 2012: 61). As a consequence, he maintains, Scottish public discourse has ‘suffered from amnesia on that’ (ibid). This a view shared by a prominent intellectual, who points to ‘victimhood works’ that have created a ‘chip on the shoulder, you know, Scotland as victim.... because the nation’s history was not really taught in schools, or at least until very recently’ (Academic [K1]).

In putting it in these terms the respondent is making the significant point that the Scottish story, just as British one, is ‘bursting with Skeletons’ (Marquand, 2009). Throughout various cycles of British expansionism the sons and daughters of Scotland made up its military and civilian ranks in copious number. Devine (2003: 251) has set himself the task of elaborating how in the most profitable parts of the East Indian Trading Company, roughly half of the accountants and officer cadets were Scottish. In the words of the third Earl of Rosebery, this relationship ‘Scotticised India and Orientalised Scotland’ (quoted in Devine, 2003: 126). Indeed from the middle of the nineteenth century, the British Raj system was created under a Scottish Governor (General James Dalhousie), while elsewhere the Scot Charles James Napier effectively annexed the Sind province (a large part of modern Pakistan). By the mid-nineteenth century, when one in ten of the British

population was Scottish, one third to a quarter of the civil service elite grade of the East India Company was Scottish. '[A]s late as 1928, the Chief of the Imperial and Indian General Staffs were both Scots' (Pittock, 2008: 9), while the hymns of war 'Scotland the Brave' and later 'Flower of Scotland'<sup>iv</sup> were appropriated as popular national anthems (McCrone, 2001: 158).

What is especially interesting for our discussion is the tension Mycock (2010: 351) describes over the ways in which 'national narratives must remain largely positive and not dwell on the imperial sins of the past'. How then is Scotland's role in the Empire, and the historical impact this has had upon various interconnected spheres, negotiated by Scottish elites? One prevailing trope is what we could describe as an *expeditionary proteophilia* – by this I mean an appetite for diversity born of searching it out over the centuries. This is demonstrated in the following two quotations from unionist and nationalist political actors respectively:

I mean, we've always been an outward looking society; Scots have traditionally had no inhibitions about setting forth usually to the, kind of, wettest, windiest parts of the world. [...] The Hudson Bay Company exploration, North West Passage, the Antarctic Whaling Fleet, none of those would have happened or been sustained without Orcadians very much in the mix. I think the more outward looking you are, the more prepared you are to go out and experience different cultures and societies; the more receptive probably your community is to that reverse process (Liberal Democrat MSP [O1]).

Scottish people have a recognition of their part in the British empire, and that when you have been part of an empire, and part of the Commonwealth as well, that you are part of a world society, and that you have a responsibility for history. So we don't see people, certainly not in the biggest population which would be the Pakistani population, we don't see them as being different to us other than, you know, they're all part of the Commonwealth (SNP MSP [Q1]).

It is evident that each focuses on the positive inheritance of Empire, much as Mycock predicts, yet it is also intriguing to note that neither unionist nor nationalist MSP refuses

ownership of Empire. There is moreover a persistently ambiguous tendency for recalling Empire and de-colonisation in Scottish politics, for it is something that taps into a sociological contradiction. This is reported by Hussein and Miller's (2006: 16) that it is common to hear Scottish ethnic minorities maintain that 'Scots understand colonialism- from their past history they understand what ethnic minorities feel'. It is reminiscent of the late Bernie Grant MP, one of the first ethnic minority candidates elected to the post-war Parliament, who insisted that he would refer to himself as British because 'it includes other oppressed peoples, like the Welsh or the Scots. It would stick in my throat to call myself English (quoted in Paxman, 1999: 74). Yet the ambiguities of recalling Empire is so multiform is that it can service the argument of the SNP's Angus Robertson MP (2010: 22), who uses a post-colonial framing in arguing that 'there was a time when Australia, Canada, Ireland, and United States were all run from London. They are all now wealthier per person than the economically centralised UK. And none of these nations would let London decide what is best for them today'. In this reading *partners* in Empire become the *objects* of Empire.

It is a tension has not gone unnoticed amongst critics who complain that 'nationalists declare themselves victims of colonialism, conveniently forgetting how many of them strutted around the colonies barking orders at the natives and relishing their sundowners' (Alibhai-Brown, 2002: 45). So there is certainly something in how empire 'complicates post-colonial dimensions of secessionist nationalist discourses' (Mycock, 2010: 350); specifically in highlighting a 'common imperial experience' (ibid.). What is especially interesting is how this can harnesses imperial history to make a pro-immigration account.

Do we want to be part of the world? Absolutely. Is our outlook international? Yes, it should be. That's very much, I think, Britain's approach to these things too. Good gosh, you can't have Britain's history and not be that. So why have very restrictive immigration policies in that, particularly in that kind of area? (Liberal Democrat [R1])

In different ways then such readings are competing to select 'from all that has gone before that which is distinctive, 'truly ours', and thereby to mark out a unique, shared destiny' (Smith, 1998: 43). While this is in part a historical activity it has observable contemporary implications, and it is to this that we now turn.

## **Boundaries for Integration**

Kymlicka (2011: 284) has argued that multinational settlements are often 'provisional' in their accommodation of ethnic minority claims, suggesting there is often a dissonance between the reasonable aspiration of minorities and the degree of willing accommodation by states. There is a tangible expression of this tension in Scotland. Political elites frequently point to a number of boundaries for ensuring integration and pursuing unity. Two examples include the question of multi-lingualism and multi-faithism. Taking the issue of language first, the national languages of Scotland include Scottish Gaelic, of which there are approximately sixty thousand speakers and which has seen important advances in its recognition. This includes the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 which created the *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*, a body charged with 'securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language'<sup>v</sup>. Amongst other rationales put forward is that 'Gaelic is...an element

of Scottishness because it's not spoken anywhere else' (Academic [U1]). Despite this recognition it is clear that in contrast to other nations, 'the language tariff which people have to pay to be 'Scots' has been low to the point of non-existent' (McCrone, 2001: 177), and so allows Scottish nationalism to be more than 'protecting a cultural past under threat' (ibid. 50 cf Bechhofer and McCrone, 2014). Yet when the question is raised of bringing other languages into the fold, which are more frequently spoken and appear to be taking on distinctive Scottish forms in terms of content and dialect, there is a consensus amongst respondents that Scottish Urdu and Scottish Punjabi could not warrant a status as one of Scotland's *national* languages. A typical summation, one that actually shares much with nationalist responses, is put forward by a conservative MSP:

Gallic has a privileged position because of the heritage and the desire to preserve the culture and the language so it's always going to get special treatment. As far as the rest is concerned I, by and large, think that we should be looking to integrate. Let's not get into this situation where there are sectioned-off communities who can't communicate with people out with their own immediate society, I think that's very dangerous (Conservative MSP [V1]).

In this assessment, historical multilingualism is a feature of the national identity whereas migrant languages are potentially, but not necessarily, fragmentary. This does not need to be illustrated further as there was a consistency (though softer language was used by other respondents). Whether or not political elites favoured or opposed the recognition of Gaelic (some respondents argued it was *a* and not *the* national language), in the view that recognising further languages could be divisive.<sup>vi</sup> Of course this is precisely what some authors argue will leave minorities feeling 'left out [when] the majority understand the polity as an expression of their nation, or agreed purpose, whatever it may be' (Taylor, 2001: 123).

A more charged illustration, however, concerns the prospects for religious pluralism, especially corporate recognition, anything up to how ‘the Irish Catholics secured various gains as part of a settlement’ (Academic [U1]). The settlement being referred to emerges through a period of Catholic Emancipation in Scotland, most clearly symbolised by the restoration in 1878 of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Scotland (McCrone, 2001). A synopsis of responses are quoted here, and which centres on the issue of parity for the state funding of faith schools to minority religions in addition to Protestant and Catholic groups:

That’s a bit of a controversial topic actually. I personally don’t think it’s a great thing. [...] I just don’t think they’re particularly helpful in this day and age (SNP MSP [A1]).

I think the scars of the, kind of, sectarian divide we’ve had are there and probably more of the focus of attention in terms of things that we need to resolve (Liberal Democrat MSP [R1]).

I think it would be extremely depressing to think that in 50 or 60 years’ time, Muslims were no more integrated than that. There remain serious problems in terms of sectarianism and attitudes and prejudices against the Catholic community and between the Catholic community and what you might call Protestants but if we repeated those mistakes in terms of other ethnic groups and other religions, I think that would be very depressing (Green [H1]).

But I’m not keen on that, you know... I still don’t like too much separation because I think you need to respect each other while talking to each other and being engaged with each other, so I suppose in that sense I’m not really an enthusiast for Catholic schools, but yet I’m not going to stand up and try and abolish them because... (Labour [U1])

There are some very good reasons to be cautious about seeking to mirror one religion settlement in the present with something from the past, and it must be stressed that *all* respondents were positive (often *very* positive) about the fact of religious pluralism in Scotland. What is interesting in these responses, however, is how each frames the question of formally recognizing religious pluralism – as opposed to the fact of religious



pluralism at large - within a register of sectarianism. There is a lively debate over the form and scale of sectarianism in Scotland (Raab and Holligan, 2012), but in most instances this has centered on enmity and discrimination between Scottish Protestants and Scottish Catholics, something that has given rise to recent Government initiatives through legislation such as the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012.

The danger is that newer religious minorities are being asked to integrate into existing configurations reproduces certain hierarchies, something recognized by Hussain and Miller's (2006) observation that 'faith-based schooling has many critics, but they [critics] are at once reluctant to dismantle the existing system of Catholic schools yet reluctant to set up a system of Muslim schools'. The clear danger for newer religious minority claims-making is that because it is framed by political elites within a register of historical sectarianism, rather than according to its own dynamics. The latter would preferably occur within a 'democratic discourse, which makes explicit the grounds on which proposals are linked to identities and hence opens up space for debate and alternatives' (Reicher et al 2005: 636). In many respects then this returns to tension *between* multinationalism and multiculturalism discussed at the outset, in so far as there is a danger that the sustainability of minority national projects in conditions of ethnic diversity places the two diversities into a hierarchy that is limiting for the latter.

## **Conclusions**

This article has considered how elite political actors are locating minorities within projects of nation building under conditions of multinationalism and multiculturalism.

Taken together it shows how these actors can play a vital role in ensuring that appeals to nationhood in Scotland can meaningfully calibrated to include minorities too. At a time when all Scottish political parties are jockeying over a vision for the nation, the article uses original empirical data to show the emergence of the three predominant clusters: an aspirational pluralism, a multiform appropriation of Empire, and potential limitations in minority claims-making and recognition. While it is certainly the case, as Kymlicka (2011: 289) recognises, that ‘countries with an inherited ethos of accommodation in relation to old minorities are not predestined to be inclusive of new minorities’, Scotland is not a textbook expression of this. Not only is the tension less stark than in some other cases, but what is especially interesting is that there is also a strong and unambiguous trend not only among majorities, but among ethnic minorities, in identifying themselves with the nation (either as Scottish only, or Scottish-British, or Scottish plus something else). The question this leaves unanswered is whether it revises how Scottish identity is imagined by the majority too, something that points to a gap between the official identity of Scotland as a nation and people’s Scottish national identities.

### *Notes*

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<sup>ii</sup> A century earlier, the 1603 union of crowns saw James VI take the throne in England, and with it ‘two of the key elements of sovereignty which were the traditional prerogative of the sovereign – foreign policy and war.’ (Pittock, 2012: 12).

<sup>iii</sup> The most recent census told us that nearly 4% or 200,000 of Scotland’s population of more than 5m consider themselves as minority ethnic. Scottish Asian populations constitute the largest visible minorities with just under 50,000 Pakistanis and more than 32,000 Indians. This is quite different from England where in the same year the ethnic minority proportion was 14%. Yet the Scottish percentage is double what it was in 2001. By the middle of the century it is expected to be approaching 10%.

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<sup>iv</sup> Flower of Scotland was first employed by Scottish rugby in the early 1970s and Scottish football in the 1990s.

<sup>v</sup> Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/7/contents>

<sup>vi</sup> Which is not to say that they opposed them but that the state should not necessarily be supporting them i.e., benign neglect should prevail.

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